Female labour Force Participation in India: An Inter-State Analysis

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1. Introduction:

The labour force refers to the population that is actively engaged in economic activities, including those who are both employed and unemployed.

The PLFS[1] (Periodic Labour Force Survey) has derived estimates of the labour force using the following methodologies:

(i) the usual status (PS (principal status) + SS (subsidiary status) approach

(ii) the current weekly status (CWS) approach

The estimate of the labour force in the usual status (ps+ss) includes

(a) Individuals who were employed or actively looking for employment for a significant portion of the 365 days prior to the survey date, and

(b) refers to individuals who were part of the surviving population and had engaged in employment for a minimum of 30 days during the 365-day period prior to the survey date.

The Current Weekly Status (CWS) provides an average representation of labour force participation over a one-week period of the survey. The estimation of the labour force using the current weekly status technique is based on individuals who have either worked for a minimum of 1 hour or have actively looked for employment and made themselves available for at least 1 hour on any day during the 7 days prior to the survey date.

Labour force participation refers to the involvement of both males and females in any kind of employment. This may be computed by determining the ratio between the number of individuals in the working population and the number of males and females who are actually employed. The labour force participation rate, as defined by the OECD[2], is determined by dividing the labour force by the total population of working age.

$$\text{LFPR \%} = 100 * \frac{Labour\ Force}{Working\ Age\ Population}$$

Where, LFPR= Labour force participation rate

Labour Force = employed + unemployed

Working age population is aged between 15-64

Also, $LFPR_w\ \% = 100 * \frac{women\ labour\ force}{working\ age\ women}$

Where, $LFPR_w$ = female labour force participation rates

Female labour force = Female who are employed + unemployed

Female working age = Age 15-59

The International Labour Organization (ILO)[3] defines the labour force participation rate as the percentage of a country's population of working age who are actively involved in the labour market, either by being employed or actively seeking employment. It offers a measure of the magnitude of the labour supply for the production of goods and services, in relation to the working-age population.

The labour force participation rate refers to the proportion of individuals in the working-age population who are actively engaged in the labour force. The labour force is the combined total of those who are employed and those who are jobless. Therefore, in order to gauge the labour force, it is necessary to assess both the employed and the jobless individuals. The LFPRs for persons based on usual status (ps+ss) obtained from PLFS (2020-21), PLFS (2021-22) and PLFS (2022-23) are presented at the all-India level for the following age groups:

- 15-29 years
- 15 years and above (15-59)
- all ages

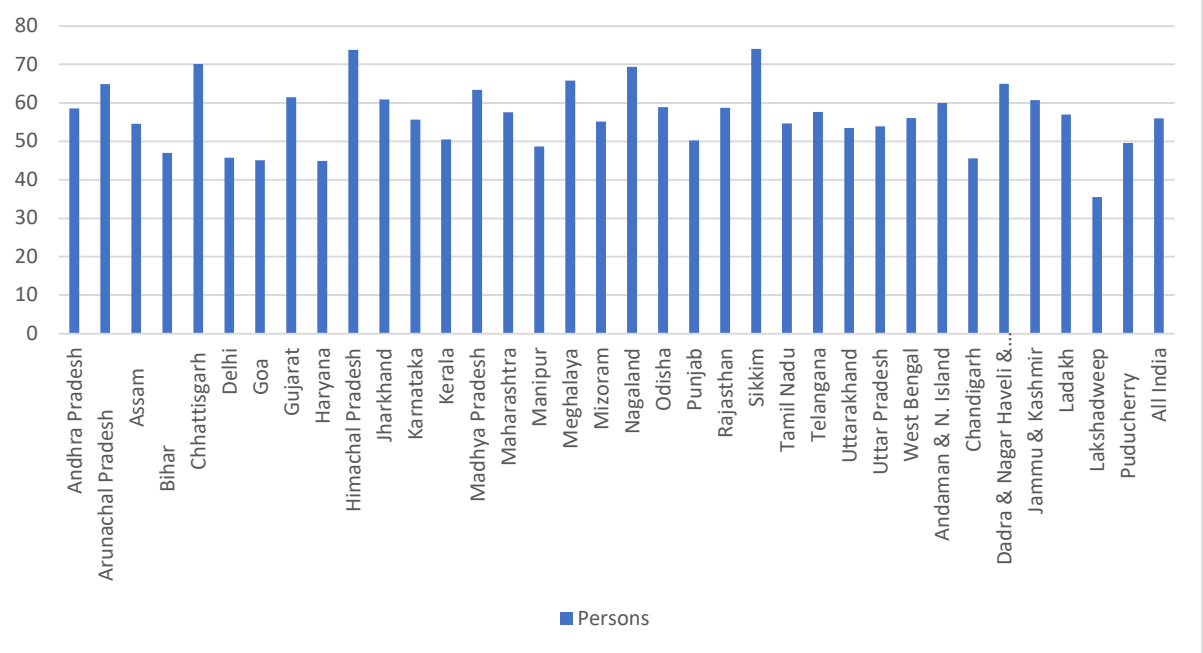
Table: 1. Worker Population Ratio (WPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) for each State/UT (Age group: 15 years and above)

State/UT	Persons
Andhra Pradesh	58.6
Arunachal Pradesh	64.9
Assam	54.5
Bihar	47.0
Chhattisgarh	70.1
Delhi	45.8
Goa	45.1
Gujarat	61.5
Haryana	44.9
Himachal Pradesh	73.8
Jharkhand	60.9
Karnataka	55.6

Kerala	50.5
Madhya Pradesh	63.4
Maharashtra	57.6
Manipur	48.7
Meghalaya	65.8
Mizoram	55.2
Nagaland	69.4
Odisha	58.9
Punjab	50.2
Rajasthan	58.8
Sikkim	74.0
Tamil Nadu	54.7
Telangana	57.7
Uttarakhand	53.5
Uttar Pradesh	53.9
West Bengal	56.1
Andaman & N. Island	60.0
Chandigarh	45.6
Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu	65.0
Jammu & Kashmir	60.7
Ladakh	57.0
Lakshadweep	35.5
Puducherry	49.6
All India	56.0

Source: Annual Report PLFS, 2022-23.

Fig.1. Worker Population Ratio in India



Female Labour Force Participation Rate: According to the PLFS study, the percentage of females of working age (15 years and above) in the labour force increased from 23.3% in 2017-18 to 32.8% in 2021-22, showing a growth of 9.5% points over this period.

Female Labour Force Participation Rate in Rural Sector: The primary impetus came from the rural sector rather than the urban sector, seeing a notable growth of 12.0 percentage points. The female labour force participation rate in rural regions has risen to 36.6% in the year 2021-22, compared to 24.6% in 2017-18.

Female Labour Force Participation Rate in Urban Sector: The female labour force participation rate in urban areas increased by just 3.4% points from 2017-18 to 2021-22, reaching 23.8%. This is a little increase over the previous year's rate of 20.4%.

Female Labour Force Participation in India: Current Status

- **Long-Term Decline in Female Labour Force Participation Rate:** Female labour force participation (LFP) has decreased over the last twenty years, reflecting a general fall in overall labour market involvement. The data suggests that the proportion of women actively participating in the workforce in India has declined from 28% in 1990 to 24% in 2022.

- **Short Term Rise in Female Labour Force Participation Rate:** The recent report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for the year 2021-22 clearly shows a rise in the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in India. The anticipated Labour Force Participation Rate for women aged 15 years and above in the nation was 30.0% in 2019-20, increasing to 32.8% in 2021-22.

Table 2: LFPR of India according to usual status (ps+ss) and CWS

LFPR (2022-2023), in %.						
Category	**RURAL**		**URBAN**		**TOTAL**	
	Usual Status	**CWS**	**Usual Status**	**CWS**	**Usual Status**	**CWS**
Male	55.5	54.5	58.3	57.9	56.2	55.4
Female	30.5	25.4	20.2	19.1	27.8	23.7
Total	43.4	40.4	39.8	39.0	42.4	40.0

Source: PLFS, report, 2022-2023.

Fig:2.1. LFPR of India (ps+ss) during 2022-23 (in%)

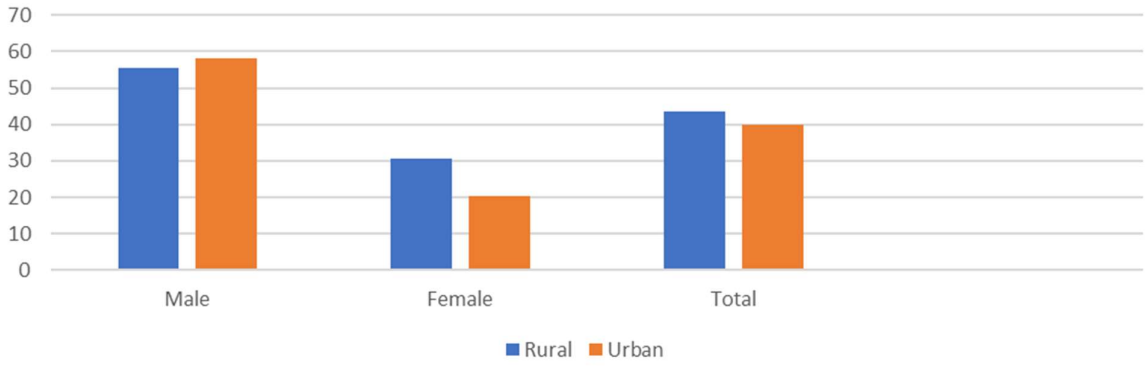
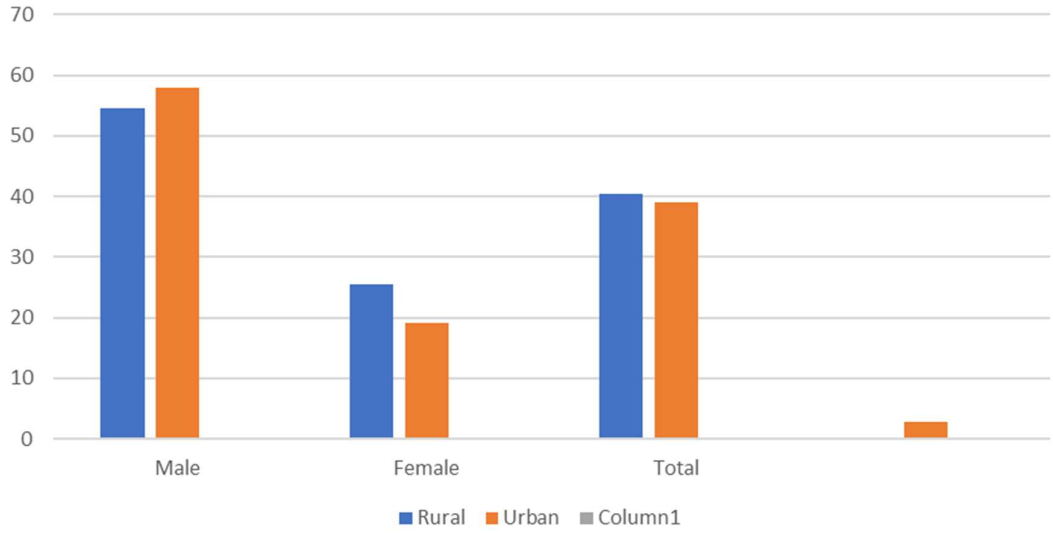


Fig:2.1 LFPR of India (CWS) during 2022-23 (in%)



Factors Responsible for Low Female Labor Force Participation in India:

- **Society and Social Norms**: Social norms are unspoken guidelines that dictate acceptable behaviour and attitudes within a certain social setting. The prevailing societal standards for females are the "Female Homemaker norm," whereas for men, they are the "Male Breadwinner norm." Approximately 3.4% of women were not part of the labour market owing to societal factors and a significant portion of women's job is centred on domestic responsibilities, such as caring.

- **Unpaid Care Work**: Married women often experience a significant lack of time, known as 'time poverty', which is a prevailing social and cultural expectation. Women engaged in household tasks do not get compensation for their labour. Approximately 49% of females

are involved in domestic responsibilities such as child care, gathering free products, sewing, tailoring, weaving, and other household tasks.

- **Gender Biased Social Norms**: Women encounter several obstacles in their quest for work, including cultural norms and expectations, as well as legal and economic limitations. Many firms have regulations that prohibit women from working the night shift, as an example. According to research by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), around 92.39 percent of individuals in India either condone intimate partner violence (which includes physical or emotional abuse) to some extent or hold the belief that women should not have the right to make decisions about their reproductive health.

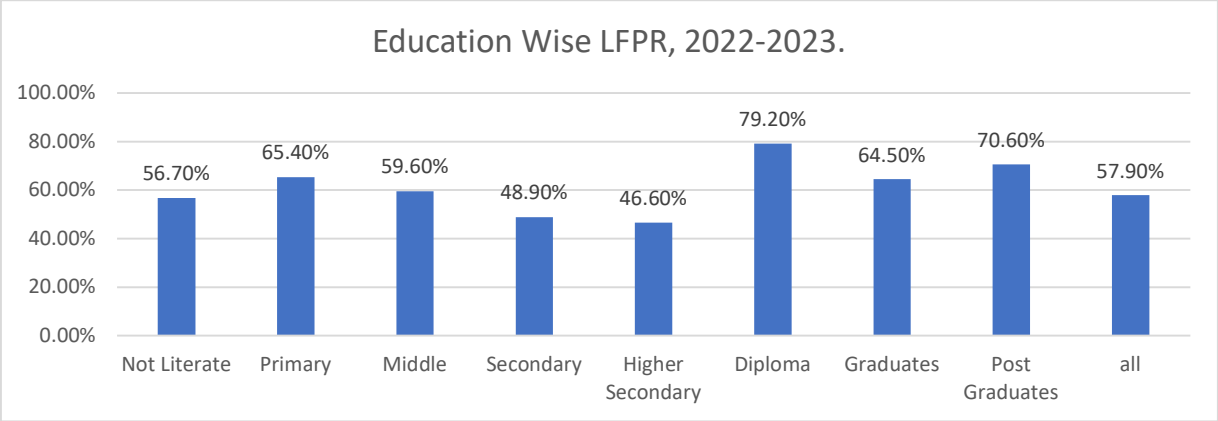
- **Caste Discrimination**: Lower-caste families have a greater level of female labour force participation (LFP) in the informal sector. This might be attributed to economic constraints and restrictions on social mobility. Historically, individuals belonging to lower castes have been traditionally assigned to do physical and domestic labour regardless of their gender. As a result, they have shown a greater tendency to be involved in the informal sector.

- **Salary/Wage Disparity**: Statistics indicate a substantial gender pay gap in all types of employment, with men consistently obtaining higher salaries than women. In 2023, the earnings of self-employed males were 2.8 times higher than those of women. Conversely, males who were employed as regular wage workers had a 24% higher income than women, while men who were employed as casual workers earned a 48% higher income than women.

- **Education Levels:** Numerous researchers have examined the significance of education for women in terms of their ability to get job. Women from higher castes, who have traditionally had better economic conditions, have had a greater likelihood of accessing school, resulting in improved employment prospects. Higher levels of education result in improved engagement in the workforce and enhanced productivity.

As to the World Economic Forum, around 64 million women worldwide were unemployed due to the pandemic, which is double the number of males. This disparity may be attributed to the fact that women are more inclined to work in informal, temporary, and part-time positions.

Fig 3: Relationship between female LFPR and education level



Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation

Significance of Female Labor Force Participation in India:

- **Economic Growth**: A higher Labour Force Participation Rate indicates a greater number of women actively engaging in the workforce, which may result in enhanced productivity and economic expansion. Women contribute a wide range of abilities and views to the workplace, which promotes creativity and productivity. A survey conducted by McKinsey Global Institute has projected that India could potentially increase its GDP by US$ 770 billion by 2025 only by providing equal chances to women.

- **Women's Empowerment**: Higher labour force participation rate leads to increased financial independence for women, enabling them to exercise autonomy in matters concerning their life, education, and family. Moreover, engaging in employment opportunities elevates the social standing of women, questioning conventional gender norms and promoting self-empowerment.

- **Global Recognition**: An ethnically and socially varied workforce improves a nation's worldwide competitiveness by fully using the capabilities of its people. Increasing the female Labour Force Participation Rate has the implication of enhancing SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent job and economic development), and SDG 10 (reduced inequality).

- **Harnessing Demographic Potential**: India, with a substantial youthful population, has the potential to use the demographic dividend by guaranteeing the engaged involvement of women in the labour force, therefore making a significant contribution to the continuity of economic expansion.

The research aims to investigate the variables that influence the female labour force. Employment will be measured by considering both agricultural and non-agricultural economic activity. The study will focus on both the industrial and service sectors within the non-agricultural business. During industrial activities, tasks such as manufacturing, building, mining, quarrying, and the provision of power, gas, and water will be carried out. Both market services and non-market services will be considered in the provision of services. The market services sector covers commerce, transportation, lodging and dining, as well as commercial and administrative services. The non-market service sector involves public administration, community, social, and other services.

Women in society have a crucial role in shaping social, cultural, economic and religious aspects of life. They are also seen as valuable economic contributors in the society. However, they continue to significantly trail behind in other aspects of life such as education, employment, good health, and economic empowerment. Empowering may be defined as facilitating the acquisition and possession of authority and resources. In order to enable them to make independent choices the government and non-governmental groups should develop appropriate strategies and initiatives to promote the economic empowerment of women.

The position of women in a society serves as a notable indicator of the extent of social equity in that community. The status of women is often assessed based on their income, work, education, health, fertility, and their responsibilities within the family, community, and society. Women have a significant and essential role in communities. Women in agriculture have a vital role in a variety of activities and contribute to the sustainable development of agriculture. To achieve inclusive agricultural growth and empower women, it is necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of their work participation, gender issues, drudgery, and health and nutritional status. The idea of women's engagement in the agricultural sector's labour force is broad and multifaceted. Promoting women's empowerment in agriculture is a crucial element of achieving inclusive development. India's lacklustre record in promoting women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is seen in several metrics. The sex ratio in various regions of the nation is 940 females to 1000 men. According to the 2014 Global Human Development Report, India is positioned at 135th place out of 187 nations on the Gender Inequality Index. Women belonging to marginalized communities such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and minority groups, specifically encounter prejudice, exploitation, and restricted job prospects.

Sex Ratio

According to the Census of 2011, the sex ratio in India is 943. However, in rural areas, it is slightly higher at 949, while in urban areas, it is somewhat lower at 929. Kerala has the greatest sex ratio in India, with a value of 1084, while Haryana has the lowest sex ratio, with a value of 879.

Literacy of females

According to the Census of 2011, the literacy rate in India is 72.99%, with a female literacy rate of 70%. Kerala has the highest literacy rate among all states, with a rate of 94%. The state with the lowest literacy rate is Bihar, with a rate of 63.23%.

Population of India

The 2011 Census recorded a total population of 1,210,854,477 crores in the nation. The rural population is 83,34,63,448, while the urban population is 37,71,06,125. In 2011, the male population was 623.72 million, accounting for 51.54% of the total population, while the female population was 586.46 million, making up 48.46% of the total population.

Women and their status

The term status means position of an individual or a community within a society. Robert Lowie (1920) has suggested four different criteria to determine the status of women in a society:

(1) actual treatment,

(2) legal status,

(3) opportunity for social participation and

(4) character and extent of work.

The position of women in a society is a notable indicator of the degree of social justice in that culture. The United Nations (1975) has provided a definition for the status of women, stating that it is the combination of the roles a woman has as a student, daughter, wife, mother, and worker, together with the influence and respect associated with these roles, as well as the rights and responsibilities she is expected to fulfil.

The status of women is often assessed based on their educational attainment, income level, work position, health condition, fertility rate, and their roles within the family, community and society. Women have a significant and vital role in communities. Women have a significant role in society since they make up around 50% of the entire population. They are diligent individuals that dedicate over 14 hours of their time to both their family and agricultural labour. They are crucial for the family's economic stability, agricultural productivity and environmental conservation. They are the focal point of the family, responsible for all social, economic, cultural, and religious activities. The growth of the community lacks significance

without the active involvement of women in all these areas. Women perform a crucial role and work diligently to support their families but they continue to live in poverty and misery.

The role of women is significant not only in social and economic activities but also in non-economic activities. The women exert significant effort and, in some instances, surpass the level of labour performed by males. Bhasin (2007)[4]. They have been equally involved with their counterparts in contributing to both home and agricultural activities. Women engage in a greater amount of physical labour than males in their agricultural fields, homes and forests. They engage in domestic tasks such as food preparation, cleaning, gathering fuel and animal feed and caring for children and elderly family members. In addition, they are able to find employment outside of their homes as laborers in farming, building work, brick kilns and other such industries. They have autonomy and liberty in the commercialization of agricultural goods. They used to go to the local market to sell veggies, forest goods and handcrafted crafts. However, from a perspective focused on materialistic progress, women continue to be denied access to education and a satisfactory quality of life.

1.1 State of the Art and Problems to be Investigated

Several investigations have focused on the socio-economic situation of women in society. The literature research for the study has extensively cited several publications and studies conducted by people to establish the relevance of the present investigation.

1.1.a Status of Women

Female labor force participation represents a women's decision to be part of the employed or unemployed population as opposed to being part of the economically inactive population (comprised of those not in work and not seeking work). The economic literature distinguishes between male and female participation in the labor market due to observed differences in trends and determinants of each. Substantial increases in female labor force participation in most developed economies since the 1950s have generated a large body of literature on the subject. Killingsworth and Heckman (1986).[5]

Sudha Pai (1987)[6] studied the status of female agricultural labors in rural India, in terms of nature and types of work performed by them in post green revolution period. Female agricultural labors in terms of class together with male agricultural labors are placed very low in agrarian hierarchy. In terms of gender, they feel the burden of poverty and exploitation more heavily than male agricultural labors.

A.V. Jose (1989)[7] found that among the developing countries of Asia, the female participation rate in the labor force in India continues to interest scholars for raising analytical issues relating to the emerging gender structure of the labor force. The studies share a general theme:

Identification of the links between increased participation of women in the labor force and a dynamic growth process in the economy.

1.1.b Wage biasness at work place

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2011), there is an inevitable disparity in land rights based on sexual orientation. Furthermore, women not only have restricted access compared to men in the society, but they are also constrained by the implicit privilege of the family to control the property that is mostly held by men. In India, Nepal, Vietnam, and the Philippines, the percentage of women who own property is less than 11 percent. In Thailand, 27% of the population owns land, while in Malawi the percentage is 32%. In Tanzania, Zambia, and Ethiopia, around 19-20% of the population owns land. If female farmers do not have secure land rights, they will be unable to obtain institutional loans and so will not be able to use the newest inputs to enhance output. Despite working in the agriculture sector, women get much lower wages than males for doing equivalent or identical tasks. Furthermore, the non-agricultural economy in rural areas mostly involves low-paying informal occupations. Consequently, the socioeconomic conditions of women in rural regions in developing nations remain inadequate (Haque, 2015).[8]

Cultural and customary traditions significantly contribute to the denial of women's rights and the absence of legal enforcement, hence exacerbating property disparity. Gender bias is a distinct characteristic of the land market. Women's buying power is diminished in the absence of credit services. In nations with low female land ownership rates, women have challenges in accessing the land market, obtaining loans, and receiving technical help services. As a result, fewer women own or rely on land. In rural South Asia, where fertile land is the predominant form of property, enhancing women's economic and social circumstances is intrinsically linked to granting women autonomous rights to land. Despite the implementation of a reformist framework, land ownership and control by women in several South Asian countries remains limited. An intricate range of elements is discovered to explain the gap between ownership and control by indigenous women. According to the Women's Economic Opportunity Index (2010), countries such as Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines did not possess this particular right. This is associated with their character and property, since it is a means of their profession (Roy2010)[9].

1.1.c Labour force participation

In **Kar's (1982)[10]** study, the ratio of male to female investment in labour in shifting agriculture was determined to be 100:136 days per year. Women had a greater contribution in several tasks, such as clearing (169:120), seeding (102:60), weeding (272:182), and cotton harvesting (56:6).

Between 1971 and 1991, the rate of women's involvement in the workforce has been rising. Although it is lower than the rate for men, it is greater than the rate for the whole female population. Additionally, he disclosed that women play a significant part in agricultural activities and are also engaged in the collecting of minor forest products, its storage, processing, and selling. He raised the issue of women in light of the growing government regulation of forests. The disturbance had a detrimental impact on the economy, significantly harming the lives of individuals, especially women. The recruitment of external agents to gather forest resources has exacerbated the challenges faced by women in their employment. Women are socially and sexually exploited by males who are not respectful towards them.

Dasgupta (1988)[11] did research on Kondhs and found that women, on average, worked 14 hours per day, while males worked 9 hours per day. Despite being in late stages of pregnancy, women were obligated to labour in the agricultural fields or travel great distances to gather fuel and minor forest resources due to the increased burden. In addition, he emphasized that the excessive burden on women was not effectively offset by the lack of small forest products and the decline in foodgrain output.

In their study, **Mawar, Jain, Verma, Kaushik, Karmahe, and Tiwari (1993)**[12] seek to comprehend the employment and economic condition of Gond women in Madhya Pradesh and its correlation with their capacity for decision-making. They have contended that their income may be augmented by elevating their literacy level and providing them with training for occupations that generate cash. Additionally, it has been emphasized that despite women working longer hours than men and engaging in both physically demanding and less demanding tasks, they often get non-monetary compensation that is controlled by men, leaving women with little authority over these benefits. They lack the authority to make decisions, especially when it comes to fundamental need. The research suggests that there is a pressing need to enhance women's knowledge via informal education, which would facilitate the empowerment of women. Additionally, they proposed establishing a women's organization to effectively harness the advantages of the development program and enhance their decision-making capabilities.

Sharan and Dayal (1993)[13] conducted a study titled "Deprivation of female farm laborers in Jharkhand region of Bihar" to examine the characteristics, reasons, and outcomes of the economic discrimination and deprivation experienced by women working as farm laborers. In addition, they propose ways to eliminate discrimination and exploitation of female workers, while empowering them to address stagnation and poverty.

Deogharia (1993)[14] discovered the level of women's involvement in work in the South Chhotanagpur district. The research reveals that the participation rate fluctuates according to the employment position. He has noticed that there is a presence of women engaging in subsistence activities in the southern region of Chotanagpur. In addition to household chores, women from all social groups participated in various forms of subsistence and other economic endeavours, which played a crucial role in sustaining their families. Additionally, he has highlighted that due to inadequate employment opportunities in the area, these people relocated to other locations.

Chauhan (1999)[15] has analysed the role of Gaddi women in the agricultural and domestic economy, as well as their involvement in decision-making for different tasks. He has disclosed that women made a greater contribution than males in the activities conducted in close proximity to their residences. Women's involvement in decision-making was found to be greater in activities that were conducted in close proximity to their homes and required the participation of their family members. However, their participation in decision-making regarding activities such as land purchase, infrastructure development, and financial allocation was relatively low.

Lodha (2003)[16] has discussed the involvement of women in employment and how it affects their ability to make decisions. This study involves a comprehensive investigation into the relevance of cultural factors, structural variables, the process of economic and social development and the influence of science, technology and modernization on women. It aims to determine the extent to which women utilize such technology and how it affects their decision-making status.

Jahagirdar (1988)[17] did research on the status and duties of Minyong women in the North-Eastern area of India. He analysed their social standing and responsibilities by considering aspects such as their level of involvement in employment, their control over resources and their influence in decision-making within their community. The research demonstrates that women's entrepreneurship and their contribution to economic productivity are significant factors that greatly facilitate the process of growth.

Gangwar, Kandekar, Mandal, and Kandekar (2004)[18] have highlighted that woman who joined a dairy cooperative experienced enhanced economic independence and self-confidence, leading to improved social status within the community. Additionally, their involvement in formal social activities and group initiatives increased, resulting in overall empowerment of cooperative members. It was proposed that women's involvement be guaranteed in cooperatives, training institutions, credit institutions, agricultural labour institutions and other

relevant organizations. This would enable them to organize themselves, recognize their needs, cultivate a positive image, and be knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities.

In research performed by **Nath (2005)[19]** titled "Status and Empowerment of Women in Tripura," it was found that the status and empowerment of women in Tripura, although relatively better than women in other parts of India, is progressing slowly but steadily. This research examined the social, economic, and marital conditions of women in Tripura and aimed to address the many factors and challenges that hinder their empowerment.

Sikligar (2006)[20] asserts that women in society play a crucial role and are equal economic partners. Women's revenue generated by Wavli is exclusively theirs, and males have no entitlement to it. The research determined that the Wavli system effectively facilitates women's empowerment by creating revenue and highlighting the role of institutions in supporting income-generating activities for women.

Tekhre (1989)[21] conducted research on 300 women from the Tamean Development Block of Chindwara district in Madhya Pradesh to assess the effects of the family welfare project on women. He has seen that women prioritize child welfare and child development programs above mother care or family planning programs. This might be attributed to their innate mother instinct and their inclination to safeguard their offspring. He noted that their primary reason for contacting physicians was to seek prenatal treatment rather than postnatal care. This preference stemmed from their worry for the well-being of the foetus throughout pregnancy and their desire to prepare for a safe delivery.

Brandon and Dixit (1983)[22] implemented a sericulture initiative targeting women in Udaipur, with a focus on examining the effects of development programs on women. It has been shown that development programs have had varying effects on various segments of women. A limited cohort of women have capitalized on educational advancements, novel career prospects and avenues for personal growth. A significant improvement in the quality of life of women was seen in the research conducted in Udaipur, Rajasthan. In addition to the economic advantages, they experienced more free time, self-sufficiency, creativity, flexibility and a heightened social awareness. In addition, they highlighted several adverse consequences of development initiatives.

Ramalinga Swami (1986)[23] performed research on 372 women, aged between 15 and 45, residing in Paderu Block of Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of government initiatives on women belonging to economically disadvantaged backgrounds. She has disclosed that despite the women's illiteracy and isolation from metropolitan influence, they demonstrated understanding of various

programs, particularly those related to health and development. Regrettably, these programs have not reached or benefitted them.

In her study titled "Women: Victims of the Development Process," **Menon (1987)**[24] specifically examines the effects of deforestation on women. She contends that the administration of natural resources, specifically forests, has led to disparities that are evident in the economic and social standing of women. These women have suffered from a combination of inequalities, including economic destitution, decline in social status and gender discrimination.

Kochhar and colleagues (2017)[25]**.** The IMF's study emphasizes the significant economic costs imposed by the unequal treatment of males and girls. Initial research conducted by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) on the economic impact of gender gaps operated under the assumption that males and females were born with equal capacity, but differences in access to education, healthcare, finance, technology, legal and educational rights, career opportunities, and social and cultural factors hindered women from realizing their full potential. Gender inequality should be eliminated in all these aspects, since it may enhance female labour force participation. Conversely, these challenges encountered by women reduced the number of skilled individuals accessible to companies.

Gender imbalance in workforce possibilities leads to reduced productivity and decreased financial development. The economic consequences of women's disempowerment have been estimated to vary from 10% of GDP in advanced nations to over 30% of the country's GDP.

In their study, **Sahay and Cihak (2018)**[26] analyse the advantages of women's cautious approach. They find that having a gender-balanced composition on corporate boards enhances overall business performance, particularly in industries that include high-tech manufacturing and expertise-intensive services. Greater gender diversity on the boards of financial regulatory organizations is also correlated with increased economic stability. Moreover, banks that have a greater representation of women on their board of directors possess larger capital reserves, a smaller percentage of loans that are not being repaid and increased resilience to financial strain. This is likely due to the fact that having more women in leadership positions promotes diversity and the blending of different perspectives, resulting in improved decision-making.

According to The Monthly Monster Salary Index report offers a comprehensive analysis of wages using a dataset collected from pay checks. The salary calculator covers eight distinct industries. Overall, the report indicates that the gender wage disparity in India is 25.4%. According to the report, the gender pay gap can be attributed to several factors, including a

preference for male employees over female employees, the promotion of male employees to supervisory positions, and career breaks taken by women due to parental responsibilities and other socio-cultural factors **(Dutta, 2017)[27].**

As to the World Bank, women make up 48.1% of India's total population, yet they only represent 20.3% of the overall labour force. India has seen substantial economic development since the implementation of liberalization policies in the 1990s. However, the participation of women in the labour sector has remained continuously low. A concerning observation is that participation has been consistently decreasing since 2005, which further endangers the gender disparity in labour force involvement. Several investigations have been conducted to elucidate this perplexing phenomenon **(Klasen and Pieters 2015; Sarkar 2019)[28].** While the majority of studies primarily examine supply-side variables such as increasing levels of education and family incomes, the decline in women's involvement in paid labour may also be ascribed to a scarcity of job possibilities and the under-reporting of women's employment.

While there is disagreement on the connection between female education and their involvement in the labour market, it is certain that increasing levels of education would have a positive impact on their engagement. Several studies have shown a negative correlation between the educational attainment of women and their participation rates in India **(Das and Desai 2003; Neff 2012)[29].** This is because educated women are less likely to be employed since they face more competition for employment.

Several studies have shown a U-shaped correlation between education and women's engagement in the labour market. This suggests that women with intermediate levels of education are less likely to be employed compared to women with either no education or high levels of education (**Chatterjee 2018; Das 2006)[30].** The U-shaped connection has been identified as a contributing factor to the decreasing rates of workforce participation **(Andres 2017)[31].**

Several studies assert that the extent of women's labour in India has been greatly undervalued. The criteria provided by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) regarding contributing family workers (classified as employed) and persons undertaking domestic care labour (classified as economically inactive) seem to include discrepancies. According to **Chatterjee (2015)[32],** the National Sample Survey (NSS) in India underestimates female labour force participation because of strict definitions of unemployment and labour force. Women's involvement in subsistence activities, together with variable scheduling and the prevalence of unpaid household labour, might lead to inaccuracies in reporting or measuring **(Sanghi 2015)[33].**

1.1.1 Problems to be Investigated

1. Women facing disparity in wage determination.
2. Women find difficult working conditions
3. Absence of child care and day care facilities at work place.
4. Women deprived of the benefits from existing development and welfare programs.

1.2. Objectives of the Investigation and Motivation

1. To know the pattern of female labor force participation in India.
2. To examine the variations in the disparities in the labor force participation rates among female across States of India.
3. To identify the determinant (Literacy level and age) of the labor force participation rate of female in India.
4. To analyze the reason behind low female labor force participation in India.
5. To analyze the policies and programs adopted by Govt. for improving labor force participation rate of women.

Research Questions

1. What is the pattern of female labor force participation in India?
2. Are their disparities in the labor force participation rates among male and female in India?
3. What are the variations in the disparities in the labor force participation rates among female across States of India?
4. What are the reasons behind low female labor force participation in India?

Hypothesis

1.Ho: There is no association between female literacy and female labor force participation.

2.Ho: There is no association between different age structure and female labor force participation rate.

1.3 Research Design and Methodology

This research is basically a study of labor force participation of female in India**.** The analysis is cross-sectional and the long-term changes in participation rates along with factors influencing participation (data trends and determinants). The major indicators will be used to illustrate the trends of labor force participation rates, unemployment rates & status of employment. Literacy level and age will be the determinant of this study.

1.3a. **Study area:** The area of study is India as a whole. But the states having high LFPR and states having less LFPR will be studied and compared. The reasons behind will be found and measures for improvement will be suggested.

1.3.b. Research Design: Descriptive & exploratory research design will be used for the study. Since the research will describe the pattern of female labor force participation all over the India and states across so it will be descriptive and will explore the reasons behind so exploratory.

1.3.c. Data Sources: The secondary sources such as NSSO, PLFS, Employment and Unemployment Survey, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment 2013-14, Economics Census, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation will be used for the study. Secondary data will be collected from various rounds of NSSO data namely 50th round (1993-94),61st round (2004-05), 68th round (2011-12) and NSSO (2017-18), Employment and Unemployment Survey (2013-14), Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment (2013-14), Economic Census, Ministry of Statistics & Program Implementation and Periodic

Labour Sorce Survey -PLFS (2018-19),(2019-20),(2020-2021),(2021-2022),(2022-2023) data will be used.

1.3.d. Data tools to be used:

Data collection is the process of collecting and evaluating information or data from multiple sources to find answers to research problems, answer questions, evaluate outcomes, and forecast trends and probabilities. It is an essential phase in all types of research, analysis and decision-making, including that done in the social sciences, business and healthcare. Tables, graphs, coefficient of correlation, regression, testing of hypothesis will be used as data tools.

Log Frame of the Research

Objectives	**Research Ouestions/ Hypothesis**	**Variables**	**Statistical tools**	**Statistical test**
To know the pattern of female labour force participation in India	What is the pattern of female labour force participation in India?	Literacy and age groups	Correlation, regression	T test
To examine the variations in the disparities in the labour force participation rates among female across states of India.	What are the variations in the disparities in the labour force participation rates among females across states of India?	Literacy rate	Range, Standard deviation	
To identify the determinants (Literacy and age) of the labour force participation rate of female in India.	H_o: There is no association between female literacy rate and female labour force participation H_o: There is no association between different age groups	Literacy Age	Correlation Regression	T test

	and female labour force participation			
To analyze the reasons behind low female labour force participation in India	What are the reasons behind low female labour force participation in India	Literacy Age	Correlation Regression	T test

1.4. Significance of the study

Women constitute 48.23% of the overall population of India, however they contribute just 32.5% (according to PLFS 2021-22) to the labour force. The labour force participation rate (LFPR) for males in India rose from 75.1% in 2017-18 to 77.4% in 2022-23, while the LFPR for females went from 21.1% to 31.6% within the same time frame. Frequently, women engage in a greater amount of physical labour in agricultural fields and forests compared to males. Women have a relatively low literacy rate, which is also linked to inadequate nutrition and bad health. The poverty estimate provided by the Planning Commission for the year 1993-94 indicates that 51.92 percent of the population in rural areas and 41.4 percent in urban areas were living in poverty.

The provisions outlined in the Constitution have resulted in changes to their standing, however they continue to face several challenges. Women in India exhibit more diligence than males and make substantial contributions to their family's financial resources, but their opportunities for revenue generation are restricted. Furthermore, as a result of a generally poor level of education, their level of awareness is similarly low, causing them to disregard fundamental health concerns. Women have lower status than males in terms of money, education, work, and health. The results may be advantageous for developing efforts aimed at ameliorating their condition of underdevelopment.

1.5. Relevance to the present-day problem and need for the Society

The socio-economic profile plays a crucial part in defining the social life and behaviour of a person. Consequently, it is crucial to examine the socio-economic context of women and comprehend the correlation between women and their immediate surroundings. In Indian society, the influence of caste and kinship on social life is evident, leading to significant disparities in terms of quality of living and sub-cultures across different groups and locations. Conducting research on the socio-economic circumstances of a leader will provide valuable

insights into the sociological relevance of these factors. Socio-economic stratification concurrently influences the configuration of political power.

The character of leadership is significantly influenced by several factors, including age, caste, gender, religion, profession, education, rural-urban background, family size and property ownership. These characteristics not only provide us with an understanding of their personality composition but also allow us to examine their social foundation. Examining the socio-economic profile, educational background, and political experience of leaders might help us predict the ability of women to fulfil their given obligations **(Ambedkar.S. N,2005)[34].**

The socio-economic profile plays a crucial role in characterizing an individual's social life and behaviour. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the socio-economic context of women and comprehend the correlation between women and their local surroundings. In Indian society, the influence of caste and kinship on social life has resulted in significant disparities in terms of standard of living and sub-culture among different groups and regions. Conducting a study on the socio-economic conditions, specifically the literacy rate of women, would provide valuable insights into the sociological importance of these factors.

1.6. Contribution to the existing knowledge

Socio-economic status is a multifaceted term that has two distinct components: the social aspect, which pertains to one's position or rank in a social hierarchy, and the economic part, which pertains to resources such as income, employment, and wealth. While there is no universally accepted definition of "socio-economic position," we are exposed to a range of meanings provided by writers and academics. One's socio-economic standing, as defined by **Oakes and Rossi (2003)[35]**, is determined by the ownership of resources that are highly valued by society, such as material things, money, power, social networks, healthcare, free time, or educational chances.

Moreover, it has been described as the social standing that a person or family has in relation to the prevailing average levels of cultural assets, money, material possessions and involvement in communal activities **(Chapin F.S., 1928)[36]**.

It is often assessed by taking into account many factors, such as education, income, and employment. Consequently, it may be said that a socio-economic position is not a distinct idea. In this research, the socio-economic position is assessed by taking into account key elements such as social, demographic and economic characteristics. An individual's social life and

behaviour may be significantly shaped by their socio-economic status. Comprehending the correlation between women and the surrounding environment, as well as the socioeconomic context of women, is of utmost importance. The influence of caste and relationships on social life in Indian society has been substantial, resulting in notable disparities in subcultures and lifestyles across various groups and regions. Studying a woman's socio-economic condition will enable us to ascertain her social significance. The arrangement of political authority is also influenced by socio-economic differentiation **(Nagaraja, S. and Pallavi. S. K, 2013)**[37].

The position of women within a culture serves as a crucial determinant of the level of social justice within a community. The status of women is often analysed based on their level of income, employment, education, health, and their responsibilities in the family, community, and society. Women have a crucial and vital part in communities since they contribute more effort and are responsible for overseeing the financial and economic aspects of their families. Additionally, many individuals engage in manual labour inside households, enterprises, and building sites. Nevertheless, due to the degradation of the environment and the presumptions made by external parties, indigenous women have challenges and obstacles in attaining a sustainable means of living and a satisfactory quality of life. In order to promote women's empowerment, it is necessary to enhance, refine, advance, and elevate the development strategy. Women in the community have adjusted to living a conventional lifestyle and pursuing careers that are dependent on natural resources. The developmental programs aimed at empowering women should be seen as mechanisms for involvement and reorganization of not only the socio-economic system, but also the whole ecosystem **(Bhasin V, 2017)**[38].

1.7 Future Work

This study discovered and assessed important new aspects in order to create and examine a strong, comprehensive framework for the involvement of women in the labour force. Considering the merits and limits of the synopsis, some potential areas for further study might be proposed.

While this study will successfully create and evaluate a strong framework for analysing women's labour force participation in India, more research will be necessary to determine the applicability of this paradigm across all states in the country. Subsequent research endeavours should aim to empirically evaluate the theoretical framework outlined in the thesis within specific regions, specific communities of India etc.

Variables that have been identified must undergo further testing in different regions of India in order to have a deeper understanding of their significance. Future work should examine the female labour force participation from economic and cultural dimensions. Subsequent research on this subject might potentially explore other impacts, such as the environmental consequences and the psychological repercussions on women. These impacts are likely to provide more insight into this significant study issue.

1.8 Tentative Chapterization

Chapter-I: Introduction

Chapter-II: Review of Literature & Research Methodology

Chapter-III: Female Labour Force Participation in India.

Chapter-IV: India & Inter – State Analysis

Chapter-V: Data Analysis

Chapter VII: Results, Discussions Conclusions & Suggestions.

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